

**CLAIMS**

1. A method for providing to software applications access to web services, the method including the steps of:

- 5       - providing a Parlay gateway (PG) permitting access to web services, said Parlay gateway (PG) including a Parlay framework (FW), and
- providing a set of modules (PX WS) comprising service interfaces for said software applications, the
- 10 modules (PX WS) in said set acting as proxies in order to perform requests for access to web services on the framework (FW) of said Parlay gateway on behalf of said software applications.

2. The method of claim 1, characterized in that it

15 includes the step of configuring the modules (PX WS) in said set for performing authentication, authorization, and execution requests on said Parlay gateway (PG) on behalf of said software applications.

3. The method of claim 1, characterized in that it

20 includes the step of providing a further set of modules (PX SCS) configured for implementing the behaviour of said web services once said requests on said Parlay framework (FW) of said Parlay gateway (PG) have been performed on behalf of said software applications by

25 the modules (PX WS) in said set.

4. The method of claim 1, characterized in that said web services are Parlay X web services.

5. The method of claim 1, characterized in that it includes the step of defining at least one web service

30 security protocol for ensuring secure interaction between said software applications and the modules (PX WS) in said set.

6. The method of claim 1, characterized in that it includes the step of providing a distributed processing

35 mechanism enabling said modules (PX WS) in said set to

interact with said Parlay framework (FW) in said Parlay gateway (PG) via said distributed processing mechanism.

7. The method of claim 6, characterized in that said distributed processing mechanism is CORBA.

5        8. The method of claim 3, characterized in that it includes the step of providing a respective distributed processing mechanism enabling said modules (PX SCS) in said further set to interact with said Parlay framework (FW) in said Parlay gateway (PG) via said respective  
10 distributed processing mechanism.

9. The method of claim 8, characterized in that said respective distributed processing mechanism is CORBA.

10. The method of claim 3, characterized in that  
15 the step of one of said software applications accessing a web service includes in turn the operations of:

- said software application subscribing a module in said further set (PX SCS) corresponding to said web service, and

20        - configuring the service properties of said subscribed module in said further set (PX SCS), wherein both said operations are performed by using the tools provided by said Parlay framework (FW) in said Parlay gateway (PG).

25        11. A system for providing to software applications access to web services, the system including:

- a Parlay gateway (PG) permitting access to web services, said Parlay gateway (PG) including a Parlay  
30 framework (FW), and

- a set of modules (PX WS) comprising service interfaces for said software applications, the modules (PX WS) in said set being configured for acting as proxies in order to perform requests for access to web

services on the framework (FW) of said Parlay gateway on behalf of said software applications.

12. The system of claim 11, characterized in that the modules (PX WS) in said set are configured for  
5 performing authentication, authorization, and execution requests on said Parlay gateway (PG) on behalf of said software applications.

13. The system of claim 11, characterized in that it includes a further set of modules (PX SCS)  
10 configured for implementing the behaviour of said web services once said requests on said Parlay framework (FW) of said Parlay gateway (PG) have been performed on behalf of said software applications by the modules (PX WS) in said set.

15 14. The system of claim 11, characterized in that said web services are Parlay X web services.

15. The system of claim 11, characterized in that it includes at least one web service security protocol for ensuring secure interaction between said software  
20 applications and the modules (PX WS) in said set.

16. The system of claim 11, characterized in that it includes distributed processing mechanism enabling said modules (PX WS) in said set to interact with said Parlay framework (FW) in said Parlay gateway (PG) via  
25 said distributed processing mechanism.

17. The system of claim 16, characterized in that said distributed processing mechanism is CORBA.

18. The system of claim 13, characterized in that it includes a respective distributed processing  
30 mechanism enabling said modules (PX SCS) in said further set to interact with said Parlay framework (FW) in said Parlay gateway (PG) via said respective distributed processing mechanism.

19. The system of claim 18, characterized in that said respective distributed processing mechanism is CORBA.

20. The system of claim 13, characterized in that  
5 the modules in said further set (PX SCS) are configured for permitting said software applications to access a web by the operations of:

- said software application subscribing a module  
in said further set (PX SCS) corresponding to said web  
10 service, and

- the service properties of said subscribed  
module being configured in said further set (PX SCS),  
wherein both said operations are performed by using the  
tools provided by said Parlay framework (FW) in said  
15 Parlay gateway (PG).

21. A communication network including the system of any of claims 11 to 21.

22. A computer program product loadable in the  
memory of at least one computer and including software  
20 portions for performing the method of any of claims 1  
to 10.